



Asquith Nursery/Creche - Basildon

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286089
Inspection date	02 November 2005
Inspector	Anita Bartram
Setting Address	C/o David Lloyd Leisure Club, Festival Leisure Park, Pippis Hill Rd South, off Cranes Farm Road, Basildon, Essex, SS14 3DG
Telephone number	01268 274138
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Registered person	Asquith Court Nurseries Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Asquith Court Day Nursery and Crèche (Basildon) is one of 19 nurseries run by Asquith Court Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1999 and operates from a suite of rooms within the David Lloyd Leisure Club. It is situated on the outskirts of Basildon. A maximum of 62 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery and crèche is open 52 weeks of the year. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. A maximum of 15 children may attend the crèche at any one time. The

crèche is open from 09.00 to 17.00 Monday to Friday, 10.00 to 16.00 on Saturdays and 10.00 to 14.00 on Sundays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 123 children aged from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery and crèche currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language. There are no children with special educational needs currently on roll.

The nursery and crèche employs a total of 21 staff. Seventeen of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about staying healthy because practitioners encourage children to follow appropriate hand washing routines before eating and after using the toilet. Children are well-nourished. Menus are currently being revised to reflect healthier eating. Staff provide fresh fruit and a variety of breads at snack time. Drinking water is readily available during session times, although water and milk is not always available at snack time. Staff do not always seize appropriate opportunities to raise children's awareness and understanding of why it is important to eat healthy foods or take part in physical exercise. For example, the organisation at mealtimes impacts on the conversations that can arise whilst eating healthy foods. Children have their health and dietary needs effectively met. Staff work closely with parents to identify individual children's allergies before they start at the group and any medication issues are thoroughly recorded and carried out.

Children regularly enjoy physical activity both inside and outdoors. Older children are generally able to determine their use of outside play during free-play time. This enables those children who enjoy physical play or who prefer to learn in a freer and less restricting environment to develop and extend their large physical skills. Children are fully aware that rigorous movement causes them to become 'puffed out' and they ask for a drink of water when they are thirsty. Senior staff are keen to develop the babies' use of the outdoor environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, very secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment. Senior staff and management have carried out thorough risk assessments and as a result, all hazards are minimised. A safety surface covers the whole of the outdoor play space to enable children to play safely in the play area. As a result, children are learning to keep themselves safe as they run, climb, balance

and jump in safety.

Children are cared for by adults who have all been vetted. Staff are encouraged to attend short courses or update their knowledge of child protection issues. This enables staff to appropriately identify any concerns in the early stages. Children are well protected because staff have an appropriate understanding of their role in safe-guarding children. All staff are aware of the written procedures and are able to put these into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All staff are keen to develop their childcare practice. Training for staff has been identified and gradually all staff will attend specific training to provide care and learning for children under three years. Staff currently working with children under three years are beginning to use the principles behind the 'Birth to three matters' framework. As a result, activities are beginning to be planned to support the specific developmental stages of children under three.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It enables children to make valuable progress in the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. As a result, all areas of their development are enhanced due to children's keen attitude to learning. Children are developing high levels of self-esteem as they independently make choices in their play and extend their own learning. For example, when they discover objects roll down the slope in the water play trough they select a drawer of other water toys to test out. Staff are positive and consistent in helping children learn about acceptable behaviour. As a result, the environment in which children are learning is calm and purposeful.

Staff knowledge of delivering the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is balanced between the six areas of learning and provides a variety of adult and child-led activities. Planning is currently being developed to ensure assessment is used by staff to inform them where to target learning objectives as they identify gaps in children's progress. Challenge and support for children of different abilities and ages is provided through purposeful staff interaction as children play. More rigorous challenge or support will be identified through the development of the planning and assessment system.

Children's development in communication, language and literacy is good. Children are using language for a wide variety of purposes, such as asking questions, making meaningful comments during story time or describing what they want or what they have done. Older children are using their developed verbal skills to resolve disputes during their play. More-able children have a sound appreciation of linking sounds to letters. Many children confidently 'write' their names on their work and some more-able children are willing to attempt to 'read' familiar words around them on walls or toy boxes. Younger children use 'book language' effectively when re-telling familiar

stories such as Goldilocks and the three bears.

Children's mathematical development is progressing well. Children use counting purposefully whilst they play, for example, routinely counting to ten during their game of hide and seek in the garden. Staff are not seizing sufficient opportunities to extend children's skills and knowledge of calculation. This is particularly evident during everyday activities such as in preparation for snack time or when taking the register. Many children understand measurement and use what they know to compare whose breadstick is the biggest at snack time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the group. Staff provide a warm welcome to children when they arrive in the rooms and parents are able to settle children directly into an activity. Key workers are readily available to support any children who need help to settle. As a result, children come confidently into the group and quickly become involved in the activities. Children's behaviour is good. They are developing a sound appreciation of right and wrong and show valuable levels of self-control. For example, younger children seek help from staff, or older children talk and reason to sort out disputes with their friends. Due to the calm atmosphere and consistent boundaries from staff, most children work harmoniously alongside each other.

At present, no children with special educational needs attend the group. However, a comprehensive statement is in place stating how the group would support any children, enabling them to have equal opportunity and access to the whole provision. Support for children who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. Staff are aware of important factors such as children's home language or level of understanding in helping them to interact with friends. Procedures are not yet in place to give staff ready access to interpreters or key words to help children settle more smoothly. As a result, staff cannot fully anticipate words children may use to communicate, or themselves use key words from children's first language to provide reassurance and comfort, particularly in the initial settling-in stage.

Children have high levels of self-esteem. They independently decide what they are going to play with or stand and watch before joining in. Children are actively encouraged to be as independent as possible within their activities they choose to do. A valuable amount of free-play time is allocated, which includes outdoor play. Staff support children in their early writing skills by providing a 'writing' table, where children routinely 'write' their names before starting their drawings.

Children ask meaningful questions about what they see or want and can describe what they are doing. Children are developing positive relationships with each other and staff. Many of the older children have developed special friendships with each other and organise their play in pairs or small groups. Children make full use of the book corner and dressing-up clothes. Within these activities staff have provided an appropriate selection of resources reflecting different cultures, gender and abilities. Through these resources children are beginning to appreciate and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others. As a result, children's

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The open environment, where parents can bring their child right into the group to settle them and chat informally to staff means very few children are unsettled. Through both formal discussion at parents evenings and informal daily discussion staff are able to keep parents updated on children's progress. Daily communication books that staff complete give parents a good overall view of their baby's routine at the end of each day. Parents are able to write quick updates about their baby's routine or care for staff to consider during the day. As a result, children and babies receive sensitive and responsive care and this has a positive impact on their physical and emotional well-being. There is a varied selection of information displayed for parents in the entrance hall. Parents of older children are able to view short-term planning in each room showing the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Displays for babies' parents around the nursery show the emerging use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and what this means to their child's development. Parents are able to see and contribute to their own child's developmental records at regular parents evenings or upon request at other times.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place and these are carried out well in practice. All the required checks have been completed and this ensures that any adult working with the children is safe and suitable to do so. The majority of staff have childcare qualifications and their professional development is actively encouraged by management and the organisation as a whole. This means that most staff have the necessary skills and knowledge in child development to effectively support children's care and education. The role of key workers is being developed to enable staff to provide more consistent care for babies and children. For example, key workers are responsible for providing all intimate care for their key children, such as nappy changing or toilet training, settling them into the group and liaising with parents. This enables babies and young children to build valuable and vital bonds with familiar adults, and results in more secure and happy children.

Staff make good use of space. The outdoor area is used daily by the older children and staff caring for babies are encouraged to take them out daily for walks or play. This widens the children's experiences of their environment and has obvious benefits to their health. There is a soft play area also available to the children so they can expend energy and enjoy rigorous exercise during wet weather. The layout of each base room has recently been reviewed to introduce 'zones' for areas of children's learning. This helps staff to provide a broad range of experiences for the children in each room. The organisation of snack times and mealtimes is sometimes disordered. Staff do not always make use of valuable opportunities to sit with children and engage in purposeful conversation, or act as positive role models with regard to table manners and behaviour.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good . Valuable improvements

have been made to the nursery provision since the last inspection and investigation visit. This has had a positive impact on children's nursery education and care. Senior management have effectively identified the group's strengths and weaknesses. A formal development plan is in place to address weaknesses in planning and assessment.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this is the first inspection since registration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, concerns were raised about various incidents of inappropriate behaviour management in the nursery. These related to National Standards 1: suitability, 2: organisation, 3: care, learning and play, 6: safety, 11: behaviour and 12: working in partnership with parents and carers. An unannounced visit was made to the provision on 25th May 2005. As a result 7 actions in total were set: 3 actions were set under standard 2, 1 under standard 3, 1 under standard 4, 1 under standard 11 and 1 under standard 14. At this inspection, all required action has been taken. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve older children's awareness and understanding of being healthy
- make better use of snack and meal times to enable staff and children to sit together

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered

person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase staff awareness of how children can use simple calculation in everyday activities.

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